



PENALTIES FOR DRIVERS LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT

By: Christopher Reinhart, Chief Attorney
Carease Gadson, Senior Legislative Secretary

EVADING RESPONSIBILITY – RECENT LEGISLATION

[PA 14-130, §§ 25 and 31-39](#) reorganized Connecticut's "evading responsibility" law into four categories according to whether the violation resulted in (1) death, (2) serious physical injury, (3) physical injury, or (4) property damage.

[PA 15-211 § 28](#) increased the penalty when evading responsibility results in death or serious physical injury to two to 20 years in prison, up to a \$20,000 fine, or both, effective October 1, 2015.

ISSUE

What are the penalties for drivers who leave the scene of an accident, including when property is damaged or a person is hurt or killed?

SUMMARY

The law requires a motor vehicle operator who is knowingly involved in an accident to stop and render assistance as may be needed and provide an injured person, an officer, a witness, or an owner of damaged property with his or her name, address, and operator's license and registration number.

A driver who fails to do so is subject to different penalties depending on whether it is a first or subsequent offense and whether the violation

resulted in death, serious physical injury, physical injury, or property damage. Penalties range from up to one year imprisonment, a fine of \$75 to \$600, or both to up to 20 years in prison, a fine of up to \$20,000, or both, effective October 1, 2015. Offenders also face license suspension penalties.

Depending on the circumstances, a driver involved in an accident could also be charged with other crimes such as misconduct with a motor vehicle ([CGS § 53a-57](#)), assault ([CGS § 53a-59](#) et seq.), manslaughter ([CGS § 53a-55](#) et seq.), or murder ([CGS § 53a-54a](#)). Intoxicated drivers could be charged with crimes such as driving under the influence ([CGS § 14-227a](#)); 2nd degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle, if he or she causes a death ([CGS § 53a-56b](#)); or 2nd degree assault with a motor vehicle, if he or she causes serious physical injury ([CGS § 53a-60d](#)).

EVADING RESPONSIBILITY

A motor vehicle operator who is knowingly involved in an accident must stop and render assistance as may be needed and give his or her name, address, and operator's license and registration number to any injured person, officer, witness of the accident, or owner of damaged property. If unable to give such information, for any reason or cause, the operator should immediately report the fatality, injury, or property damage to a police officer, constable, state police officer, or an inspector of motor vehicles, or at the nearest police precinct or station. The report should include the information described above and the location and circumstances of the accident ([CGS § 14-224 \(a\) and \(b\)](#)). A "serious physical injury" is one that creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes serious disfigurement, impairment of health, or loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ. A "physical injury" is an impairment of physical condition or pain ([CGS § 53a-5](#)).

The penalties for evading responsibility for an accident vary depending on the type of harm caused as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: PENALTIES FOR EVADING RESPONSIBILITY

Statute	Injury or Damage Caused	Penalties	
		Prison Sentence/Fine	Driver's License Suspension Period
14-224(a)	Death	Two to 20 years, up to a \$20,000 fine, or both	1 st violation: At least one year Subsequent violation: At least two years
14-224(b)(1)	Serious physical injury	Two to 20 years, up to a \$20,000 fine, or both	1 st violation: At least one year Subsequent violation: At least two years
14-224(b)(2)	Physical injury	1 st offense: Up to one year, a \$75 to \$600 fine, or both Subsequent offense: Up to one year, a \$100 to \$1,000 fine, or both	1 st violation: At least 90 days Subsequent violations: At least one year
14-224(b)(3)	Property Damage	1 st offense: Up to one year, a \$75 to \$600 fine, or both Subsequent offense: Up to one year, a \$100 to \$1,000 fine, or both	1 st violation: At least 90 days Subsequent violations: At least one year

Someone charged with evading responsibility may, based on their prior record, be eligible for the accelerated pretrial rehabilitation (AR) program if they did not cause a death in the accident. AR is a program for individuals facing imprisonment for a charge that is not serious in nature. Individuals in the program are released to the custody of the Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD) for supervision or probation for a period not to exceed two years. Once an individual satisfactorily completes the probationary period, they, or CSSD, may request a dismissal of the charges ([CGS § 54-56e](#)).

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